

SURGERY OF ARTHRITIS. By Robert A. Milch, M.D. (Editor). (Pp. x+280; Illustrated, 92s.). London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1964.

THIS book has been written in an effort to give more detail of surgical procedure, applicable to the treatment of arthritis than is found in the main text books of rheumatic diseases, and as such is presented as a "surgical primer for the physician."

The Editor is supported by sixteen international contributors, all experts in their own fields. Each discusses the various types of arthritic involvement of a specific joint. The anatomy, pathology, disorders of function and methods of operative correction are considered in detail and, especially important to the physician in charge of rheumatic diseases, the operative procedures are discussed fairly fully. Methods of treatment other than by surgical operation are mentioned only briefly. There are profuse radiographic and line drawing illustrations with sketches and photographs of the operative fields. Unfortunately a few of the figures, especially those on the temporo-mandibular joint, are indistinct and the X-ray reproductions of the spine fail to make their point.

The style makes for occasional ambiguity and difficulty in reading. The danger lies in the simplicity with which many of the procedures are presented. Many of these might be regarded as "experimental" by other than the specialized orthopaedic surgeon, in the hands of whom the results are far from uniformly good. The multiplicity of operations advocated in arthritis of the hip casts doubt on their effectiveness and the treatment of osteoarthritis of the shoulder by prosthesis carries a high risk of failure.

With these reservations the overall objectives of the book are well achieved. The sections on the hand, knee joint and hip are excellent. There are many up-to-date and useful references after each chapter.

The binding and printing are of a high quality and although expensive at 92s. it fills a very useful place for those engaged in treating patients with rheumatic diseases.

M.W.J.B.

PSYCHIATRIC ILLNESS: Diagnosis and Management for General Practitioners and Students. By H. Merskey, M.A., B.M., D.P.M., and W. Lawton Tonge, M.D., D.P.M. (Pp. 264, 27s. 6d.). London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1965.

THIS small book is refreshing in that it has broken away from the custom of recent short books on psychiatry by avoiding a routine systematic discussion of psychiatry. Instead, the book opens by going into the difficulties which doctors experience in handling psychiatric patients in practice. Attention is drawn to the feelings and reactions of the doctor, as well as those of the patient.

The second section covers the common general problems in consultation and the general principles of psychiatric treatment. The third section ranges widely over special areas, such as problems of children and adolescents, old age and psychosomatic illness. The final section of the book covers the handling of psychiatric emergencies in practice.

The authors' emphasis in aetiology seems to be on psychoanalytic theory, although they do cover briefly other theories. Their descriptions are most vivid about psychotherapy and tend to be more pedestrian on the more organic aspects of aetiology and treatment. Their remarks on drug treatment are too dogmatic; they suggest that certain drugs, whose value is still a subject of controversy, are of established benefit.

The book is refreshing in its not following the familiar systematic approach to psychiatry. It seems to the reviewer more directed towards general practitioners than medical students. It might have been more useful to the general practitioner to have supportive therapy dealt with in greater detail, and specialised insight psychotherapy given less scope, since this is unlikely to be within the province of the average practitioner who has not had any special training. This imbalance, and the uncritical drug enthusiasm, are drawbacks to a book containing much common sense and practical advice.

W.O.McC.